

AN
EXHORTATION
TO ALL
CHRISTIAN PEOPLE,
TO REFRAIN FROM
TRINITARIAN WORSHIP.

We preach unto you, that ye should turn unto the
LIVING GOD, who made heaven and earth and the
sea, and all things that are therein. Acts xiv. 15.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the following address, great use is made of a tract entitled, "A free and serious address to the christian laity, especially those, who, being of unitarian sentiments, conform to trinitarian worship," which is ascribed to Mr. Toulmin, of Taunton. The words of other authors, as quoted by that writer, are also in some places adopted, without any reference being made to them.

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T M H 60

P R E F A C E

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THE writer of the following address is unwilling to let a second edition of it appear, without attempting to point out the inconsistency of those who have expressed their approbation of the sentiments it contains, whilst they continue to join in trinitarian worship. It was not drawn up so much with the view of exposing the errors of the book of Common-prayer, as of prevailing upon you, who are sensible of those errors, to discontinue the use of devotional forms, which you look upon as inconsistent with the scriptures. Be intreated, brethren, carefully and seriously to review the considerations which are laid before you in this little tract. Carry in your minds, whilst you are reading it, that *you* are the persons principally addressed. Apply every *argument*—for religion is a *personal* concern---apply every argument to *yourselves*. Examine them carefully, and inquire if you can be justified in treating them with neglect. Do not strive with yourselves. Beware of admitting any vain plea, as a sufficient apology for your acting inconsistently

silently with your convictions. Will you say that you are advanced in life---that your habits are fixed---that it is too late for you to think of forsaking the ways to which you have been accustomed from your infancy? And do you really think that such an excuse will be admitted by the great searcher of hearts? An excuse for what? For acting as an hypocrite, and for supporting those gross corruptions of the gospel which rob it of its beautiful simplicity, and prove an insurmountable stumbling-block in the way of unbelievers of every denomination. If such an apology will acquit you, it will acquit the greatest sinner upon earth; for such an one can plead that his habits are of too long a standing for him to root them up. The fact, however, is, that this consideration, instead of excusing him, will serve to aggravate his guilt and increase his punishment. Trifle, therefore, no longer---no longer confess the truth in words, whilst in actions you deny it: assert the fairness and simplicity of your characters. Let the promise of our lord to those disciples who should act a consistent part, animate you to surmount the difficulties which lie in your way. "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Matt. x. 39. In the present happy times, the friends of the truth have not those dreadful hardships to encounter, which in former days fell to the portion of those who stood forth in opposition to prevailing errors. But still, if you act agreeably to your convictions, you

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must expect to meet with some reproach and opposition. "In the world we must have tribulation: but let us be of good cheer: our lord hath overcome the world." Let his example encourage us. Let us be neither terrified from bearing an unwavering testimony to the truth, nor irritated against those who may condemn us. Ere long they may become our firmest friends. And if it be otherwise, let us not render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing---in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. This is by no means inconsistent with the most determined zeal for the truth. Let us always remember that it is not the *men*, but their *errors*, that we are to oppose. Of the men, let us endeavour to think as charitably as possible. Let us avoid putting the most unfavourable construction even upon their heat and violence. Let us not be ever ready to impute that behaviour to mere malice, which may really spring from a sincere attachment to what they believe to be the truth. One should hope that the violence of persecutors may sometimes be ascribed to the mistakes of the head, and not to the depravity of the heart. I trust that some of those who would draw the sword against us on earth, will rejoice to meet us in heaven.

But whilst you exercise the greatest candour towards those who differ from you, permit me to recommend it to you to take every opportunity of attempting to correct their errors, and to give them juster

notions of the christian religion. You, who have been educated conformists, must enjoy many opportunities of doing this, which do not fall in the way of those whose connections naturally lie among dissenters from the established church. You likewise are better able to enter into the feelings of churchmen than they are, and can afford a more unequivocal evidence, that a regard to truth, and to consistency of character, has really some practical influence upon your own minds.

And whilst you are thus exerting yourselves let the excellence of your conduct be answerable to the warmth of your zeal. Those who greatly interest themselves in matters of religion, are always watched by the world with the most critical exactness, and are expected to live under the influence of that religion, about which they appear so much concerned. Let your light, then, so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your father who is in heaven.

AN
EXHORTATION
TO REFRAIN FROM
TRINITARIAN WORSHIP.

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

It is upon a matter of great importance that I am now about to address you. I trust you will pay all possible attention to what I am going to say. May God almighty give you a serious, unprejudiced mind! May he open your eyes to the truth as delivered by the blessed Jesus! May he enable you to obey the dictates of your consciences, and to follow your honoured and beloved master, through evil report, or through good report, through life or through death! It is under a sense of the presence of the great God and, I trust, with a view to his honour and glory, that I now exhort you to turn from the worship of those who are *called* gods, whether in heaven or in earth, and to confine your religious homage to that ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things*.

You know, my brethren, it was foretold by the apostles, that there should be a great falling away from the simplicity of Christ, and that the gospel,
that

* 1 Cor. viii. 6.

that precious jewel, should be greatly tarnished, in passing through the polluted hands of men. Their prophecy was remarkably fulfilled. Christianity was quickly disfigured. It was but about two hundred and fifty years ago, that those doctrines which we term the errors of popery, were firmly held by almost all the christian church: and when our forefathers began to discover their mistakes, the corruptions of christianity had gained so firm a footing, and had been established so many hundred years, that old gospel truths were looked upon by most men as mere novelties, and nothing was more common than for the catholics to cry out upon the protestants, "Where was your doctrine before Luther arose? Where was your church before king Edward's days?"

It was not to be expected, that men should at once obtain an unclouded view of christianity; that they should at once see through all the errors which had been collecting together for more than a thousand years. Accordingly, though (in the midst of much insult and opposition) they removed a great deal of rubbish from the fair gospel building, they suffered no small quantity to remain: though they attacked, with all their might, one species of idolatry, they strained every nerve to support another, persecuting unto death those who would worship no other being than the one God and Father of all. So generally has the doctrine of three eternal persons (each of whom is

said

said to be God) been received, even by protestants, that I should not wonder if some of you, my friends, for want of knowing better, should follow the example of the catholics, and charge us, who deny that doctrine, with introducing novelties: though it has been proved, to the satisfaction of many worthy christians, that the *body of believers*, for the space of more than two hundred years after Christ, held that the *Father only is God*, and that the lord Jesus was nothing more than his highly favoured son and messenger*. This is very different from the doctrine of the church of Rome, of England, or of Scotland. How widely these churches have deviated from the faith of the holy scriptures, as well as from the practice of Jesus and his apostles, with regard to religious worship, you will be able to form some judgment from the following contrast.

* The heads of the argument to prove this point, may be seen in a little pamphlet, entitled, “ A general view of the arguments for the unity of God, and against the divinity and pre-existence of Christ, from reason, from the scriptures, and from history.” But those who wish to see the question fully canvassed, will peruse the controversy between Dr. Priestley and Dr. Horsley, &c.

DIRECTIONS *relative to the OBJECT of worship,*
with specimens of PRAYERS—of devout WISHES,
&c.

Found in the CHRISTIAN
 SCRIPTURES.

“Thou, when thou prayest, pray to thy FATHER, who is in secret, and thy FATHER, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our FATHER, who art in heaven.”—Matt. vi. 6, 9. Luke ix. 2.

“Jesus saith—the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth, for the FATHER seeketh such to worship HIM.” John iv. 23. See also John

Found in the BOOK of
 COMMON PRAYER,
and in the writings of
 PRESBYTERIANS *and*
other DISSENTERS.

“The catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity.—*Athanasian creed.*

“Then likewise the minister shall say, Glory be to the Father, and to the son, and to the holy ghost; Answer, As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end*.”—*Morning service.*

“Above all things, ye must give most humble

* *Pope Damasus* is said to have decreed, in a Roman council, that glory to the Father, and to the son, and to the holy ghost, should be said or sung at the end of the psalms. This was in the latter part of the fourth century.

From the Scriptures.

xiv. 13, 14. xv. 16.
xvi. 23.

“ I bow my knees
unto the FATHER of
our lord Jesus Christ, of
WHOM the whole family
in heaven and earth is
named.” Eph. iii. 14,
15.

“ Giving thanks al-
ways, for all things unto
GOD, even the FATHER,
in the name of our lord
Jesus Christ.” Eph. v.
20. See also ch. ii. 18.
Rom. xv. 6. Col. i. 3,
12. ch. iii. 17. James
iii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 17*.

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

and hearty thanks to
God the Father, the son
and the holy ghost, for
the redemption of the
world, &c.” *Communion
service.*

“ It is very meet,
right, and our bounden
duty, that we should, at
all times and in all
places, give thanks unto
thee, O Lord! almighty
and everlasting God, who
art one God, one lord;
not *one only person, but
three persons*, in one sub-
stance. For *that* which
we believe of the glory of

* It is said, Heb. i. 6. “ when he bringeth in the
“ first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all
“ the angels of God worship him :” and we read of
particular persons worshipping our lord. But it is
well known that by the term *worship* is not always
meant *religious* adoration. It is frequently used to
describe those marks of respect which are paid to great
characters. Some of the persons who are said to have
worshipped Jesus, (Matt. viii. and ix. 18.) were jews.
Now the jews paid *religious* worship to God only.

Indeed

*From the Scriptures.**From the Com. Prayer, &c.*

“ At that time Jesus father, *the same** we be-
 answered and said, I thank lieve of the son, and of
 thee, O FATHER, lord the holy ghost, without
 of heaven and earth, be- any difference* or inequa-
 cause THOU hast hid these lity.” *Upon the feast of*
 things from the wise and *trinity.*

Indeed I should imagine that few trinitarians them-
 selves will assert that at the period when the leper or
 the ruler worshipped (or made obeisance to) Jesus, the
 doctrine of his deity was publicly taught. Conse-
 quently that worship had nothing in it of a religious
 nature.

It is said, 1 Chron. xxix. 20. “ All the congrega-
 tion worshipped the lord and the king :” and in
 Daniel ii. 46. “ that Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face
 “ and *worshipped* Daniel, and commanded that they
 “ should offer an oblation (or present) and sweet odours
 “ unto him,” as a mark of respect, agreeable to the
 eastern method of doing persons honour. Jesus also,
 speaks of a servant who fell down before his master, and
worshipped him. Matt. xviii. 26. When therefore we
 read that the *leper worshipped* Jesus—that his disciples,
 upon his ascension, worshipped him, &c. it is reason-
 able to understand it as meaning nothing more, than
 that they did him homage, as a great character, or as
 a divine prophet. You will be confirmed in this, upon
 finding that all their religious addresses were directed to
 the one GOD, the Father of Jesus.

* If ye loved me, said the lord Jesus to his disciples,
 ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father :
 for my Father is GREATER than I. John xiv. 28.

From the Scriptures.

prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even so FATHER, for so it seemed good in THY sight." Matt. xi. 25, 26. Luke x. 21.

" And he—fell on his face and prayed, saying, O MY FATHER, if it be possible let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I will but as THOU wilt." Matt. xxvi. 39. See Mark xiv. 36. Luke xxii. 42. xxiii. 34. 46.

" And Jesus lift up his eyes and said, FATHER I thank thee that THOU hast heard me." John xi. 41.

" Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, FATHER save me from this hour ? but for this cause came I unto this hour. FATHER, glorify thy name." John xii. 27, 28.

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

" Religious worship is to be given to God the father, the son, and the holy ghost ; and to him alone." *The Assembly's confes. of faith*, ch. 21.

" The second part of prayer is adoration, and it contains (1.) A mention of his nature as God ; and this includes his most original properties and perfections : his unity of essence, that there is no other God besides him : his inconceivable subsistence in three persons, the father, the son, and the holy spirit ; which mystery of the trinity is a most proper object of our adoration and wonder since it so much surpasses our understanding." —

Watts's Guide to prayer, p. 6.

" We must give honour to three persons in

From the Scriptures.

"Holy FATHER, keep, through thine own name, those whom THOU hast given me." John xvii.

11. See also John xvii. 1, 3, 5, 13, 24, 25, and Acts iv. 24, &c.

"Blessed be GOD, even the FATHER of our lord Jesus Christ, the FATHER of mercies and the GOD of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation." 2 Cor. i. 3. See also Eph. i. 3.

"Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter i. 3.*

* We read, Acts vii. 59. that "they stoned Stephen calling (*upon God* is not in the original) and saying, Lord Jesus receive "my spirit," or breath of life, as

From the Com. Prayer, &c.
the godhead distinctly: to the Father, the son, and the holy ghost." *Henry's Method of prayer.*

"Thou art the king of glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting son of the Father." "We therefore pray thee to help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.— Make them to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting." *Te Deum.*

"O God the son, redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

"O God the holy ghost, proceeding from the father and the son, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

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From the Scriptures.

"According to the will of GOD, the FATHER, to whom be glory for ever and ever." Gal. i. 4, 5.

"Now unto GOD, even our FATHER, be glory for ever and ever." Phil. iv. 10.

"Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise GOD, be honour and glory for ever and ever." 1 Tim. i. 17. See also Matt. vi. 13. Luke ii. 14. Rom.

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

"O holy, blessed, and glorious trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

"Whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood. By the mystery of thy holy incarnation; by thy holy nativity and circumcision; by thy baptism, fasting and temptation; by thy agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death and burial;

if he had said, "accept this sacrifice of my life which I lay down for thy sake." Stephen had just seen the heavens opened, and the son of man standing at the right hand of God. The impression made by so grand a spectacle would not quickly wear off. Is it wonderful then that he should address that son of man? When we are in similar circumstances, it is to be presumed that we may do the same. Paul says to Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 12. "I thank Jesus Christ our lord." But we may express our thankfulness towards any absent friend and benefactor, without directly addressing, much more without worshipping, that friend.

*From the Scriptures.**From the Com. Prayer, &c.*

i. 25. xi. 33, 36. xvi. by thy glorious resurrection and ascension; and
 25, 27. 2 Cor. xi. 31. by the coming of the holy
 Eph. iii. 20, 21. 1 Tim. ghost.
 vi. 14, 15, 16. 1 Peter
 v. 10, 11. Jude 24, 25, " Son of God we be-
 Rev. iv. 8, 11. vii. 11, seech thee to hear us.
 12.* " O lamb of God, that

" Grace be to you and takest away the sins of the
 peace from GOD, our world, have mercy upon

* There are in scripture a few ascriptions of praise and glory to the lord Jesus, 2 Peter iii. 8. Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 9, 11, 12, 13. vii. 9, 10. but not one, as if he were the great God. Indeed, they are not *addressed* to him, as if he were supposed to be present, except in the Revelation, c. v. and vii. where he is represented as being actually before the angels who address him. It should also be observed that he is there addressed as the *lamb that was slain*, as a creature capable of dying, which can never be said of the eternal, unchangeable Jehovah. Indeed, they address him as a Being entirely distinct from God; "thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God." v. 9. If he be joined with God in this act of praise, it is no more than David was. "All the congregation bowed down their heads, and worshipped the lord and the king." 2 Chron. xxix. 20. Honour will be due to the holy Jesus, but not religious worship.—Rom. ix. 5. may be translated—"the God over all (the supreme God) be blessed for ever."

From the Scriptures.

FATHER, and the lord
Jesus Christ." Rom. i.
7.

" Grace, mercy, and
peace, from GOD, the
FATHER, and Jesus
Christ our lord." 1 Tim.
i. 2.

" Grace be with you,
mercy and peace from
GOD the FATHER, and
from the *lord* Jesus Christ,
the son of the FATHER,
in truth and love." 2
John 3.

" Grace be unto you,
and peace, from HIM who
is, and who was, and
who is to come; and
from the seven spirits*,
who are before the
throne—and from Jesus
Christ, who is the faith-
ful witness, and the first-
begotten from the dead,

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

us. O Christ hear us.
Lord have mercy us.
Christ have mercy upon
us. Lord have mercy
upon us.—From our ene-
mies defend us O Christ.
O son of David have
mercy upon us. Graci-
ously hear us, O Christ;
graciously hear us, O lord
Christ." *Litany.*

" For thou only art
holy, thou only art the
lord: thou only, O Christ,
with the holy ghost, art
most high in the glory of
God the Father." *Com-
munion Service.*

" Now unto the king
eternal, immortal, invisi-
ble, the only wise God,
and our God in three per-
sons, father, son, and holy
ghost, be honour and glory,
dominion and praise, hence-

* This expression shews that this and the three pre-
ceding passages should be considered only as *pious*
wishes and not *prayers*, for surely the writer would not
pray to the seven spirits.

From the Scriptures.

and the prince of the
kings of the earth." Rev.
i. 4, 5. See also Rom.
xvi. 20, 24. 1 Cor. i. 3.
2 Cor. i. 2. xiii. 14.
Gal. i. 3. vi. 18. Eph.
i. 2. vi. 23. 24. Phil. i.
2. iv. 23. Col. i. 2. iv.
18. 1 Theff. i. 1. iii. 11.
12. v. 23, 28. 2 Theff.
i. 2. ii. 16, 17. iii. 5.
16, 18. 2 Tim. i. 2, 18.
iv. 22. Titus i. 4. iii.
15. Philem. iii. 25. Heb.
xiii. 20, 25. 1 Peter i. 2.
v. 10, 14. 2 Peter i. 2.
Jude 2. Rev. xxii. 21.

From the Com. Prayer, &c.
forth and forever. Amen."
—*Henry on Prayer.*

" —Through Jesus
Christ our lord; to whom
with thee, O Father, and
thine holy spirit, be ever-
lasting praises." *Dod-*
dridge.

" Jesus, my God, thy
blood alone,
Hath power sufficient to
atone."

Watts, Ps. l. 51.
" To God the Father,
God the son,
And God the spirit, three
in one,
Be honour, praise and
glory given,
By all on earth and all in
heaven."

Watts's Doxology.
See also Ps. xix. long
metre, ver. 5, 6. ps. xlv.
c. cx. cxviii. &c.

" God the Father, God
the son, and God the holy
ghost, bless, preserve and
keep you." *Matrimony.*

BRETHREN, before I proceed, suffer me to ask you, if you have carefully considered the passages, which have been laid before you? Have you read them over with attention? Have you endeavoured to read them with impartiality? Have you prayed to almighty God, that he would not suffer you to be carried away by groundless prejudices—that he would open your eyes to his truth?

Brethren, it is no trifling matter. It is a very serious question, whether we be to worship one divine person, or three divine persons—one God, or three Gods. Have you, then, really perused the above contrast with that serious attention, which the subject calls for? I do not pretend to have produced every *prayer*, or *devout wish*, or *doxology* to be met with in the New Testament. But I believe there are but few, which are neither copied, nor referred to. One should hope you will not think it too much trouble to turn to those places in your bible, to which you are referred, and to those also, of which the words are given, that you may be satisfied one has quoted them fairly, and also selected such as are proper specimens of the whole.—Supposing that you have done this, and are satisfied; permit me to inquire, if you do not think, that there is a very striking difference between the scripture plan of worship, and the church of England plan*? Do you not think that the lord
Jesus

* Though the church of *England* only is expressly mentioned here, and in other places in this address; yet

Jesus and his apostles prayed very differently from the members of our established church? Jesus and his apostles prayed to the FATHER, and to no other. He who is guided by the English liturgy, prays to God the Father, God the son, and God the holy ghost, to "the holy, blessed, and glorious trinity." The former worshipped *one* being: the latter worshipped *three* persons or beings†. The former, therefore, and those

yet the same observations which are made to shew that it is the duty of unitarians to leave *that* church, are generally applicable to trinitarian churches among the *dissenters*.

† When trinitarians assert that the Father is God, the son God, and the holy ghost God, they must mean that the terms father, son, and holy ghost, are three different *names* of the *same* being, or that they are expressive of *three distinct beings*. If they mean that they are only different *names* of the *same* being, it is difficult to see in what respect they differ from unitarians, except in using a language, which is very liable to be misunderstood. But if they mean that the terms Father, son, and holy ghost, are expressive of *three distinct beings*, each of whom is God, is it not undeniable that they assert the existence of THREE GODS? It is to no purpose for them to say, that they mean that there are three persons in the godhead; for still the question returns, What do you mean by the word person? Do you mean that there are three *names* belonging to the godhead? Or do you use the word *person*, as it is commonly used, to signify a distinct *being*, or intelligent agent?

those who follow their example, we may call "unitarians," the latter we may be allowed to term "trinitarians." Does it not also appear, as if the trinitarians paid religious adoration to a mortal man? For could GOD redeem us by his blood*? Could the eternal, unchangeable Jehovah, be *born*, be *circumcised*, be *baptized*, be *tempted*, be in an *agony* and *bloody sweat*, be *crucified* and *suffer*? Could the immortal ONE *die* and be *buried*†? And yet the Being, whom in the litany you address, is a Being of whom this is spoken. But surely no such being is worshipped in the holy scriptures. The only being there adored, is the King eternal, immortal invisible. Had our heavenly Father designed that we should worship a God the *son*, and a god the *holy ghost*, would he not have informed us of it in the bible? Had he designed that

* Neither Acts xx. 28. nor 1 John iii. 16. countenance an idea so shocking, for there is the greatest reason to believe that Luke wrote it, "Feed the church of the *lord*," i. e. of the lord Jesus; as it is thus quoted by the most antient christian writers. John probably wrote, Herein we perceive love, in that he, &c. (meaning Jesus.)

† The trinitarians, who address Jesus Christ in the language of the litany,—By the mystery of thy holy incarnation, &c. must address him as *man*, or as *God*. If as *God*, then they assert that God was born, bled, died, &c. If as *man*, then they coolly and deliberately pray to a mere mortal.

that we should worship a *trinity* of Gods, would the scriptures have been silent about it? That we must worship the *Father* is plainly declared. But we have neither precept, nor example, for going farther. On the contrary, Jesus declares, that we must worship the *Lord our God*, and serve *him only**; and whom he meant by the lord, appears plainly from his directing his disciples to pray, saying, "OUR FATHER, who art in heaven." May we not conclude then, that the worship of *two-other* persons, is a merely human invention, and supported by merely human authority? But it is followed by the church of England. Upon this ground, I exhort you to leave the church of England—no longer to join in her religious services—no longer to countenance her unscriptural practices.

Worship the GOD of Jesus and his apostles--- worship the GOD of the bible—worship *that* GOD according to the dictates of your consciences—Permit me to urge it upon you by the following considerations:

FIRST CONSIDERATION. *We ought to obey GOD rather than man.* Suppose that almighty GOD appeared to you, and said, "Thou shalt have no other GODS but ME, for I the Lord thy GOD am a jealous GOD." Suppose that a mortal man appeared next, and directed you to pray not only to GOD the Father, but to a God the son, and a God the holy ghost; should

* Matt. iv. 10.

should you hesitate which to obey? But what difference is it, whether the Almighty appear in person to you, or whether he inform you of his will by his holy messengers and prophets? What difference is it, whether one man or ten thousand men, stand up in opposition to him? The path of duty is equally plain in both cases. You cannot hesitate whom to obey: you cannot hesitate whose instructions to receive. Shall *they* be your guides, who direct and require you to pray to the Father, the son, and the holy ghost, or *he* who hath told us, that true worshippers must worship the FATHER?

It matters not on what grounds *men* propose their rules, or convert their sentiments into a law; whether they plead the honour of their redeemer; whether they infer their directions from the character he sustains; or whether they plead the practice of christians for several hundred years. If it appear to us that they prescribe what GOD hath not required, all that they can set before us, is to be considered as only *their* opinion, *their* deductions, *their* will; not GOD's word and will. Let them be ever so pious and learned, their injunctions are still only *human*: and the question returns, shall we hear men rather than GOD?

It matters not by how many, or how devoutly, certain invocations, prayers, and doxologies, are used: the great question is, are they countenanced by the new Testament? You see they are not. How then
can

can they be used without violating that reverence which we owe to GOD; without violating the plain authoritative directions which he hath given us? It deserves, christians, your claim and serious consideration, whether you can do this, and be blameless? Will you plead that you are actuated by love and reverence to the Lord Jesus, and by your sacred regards to the holy spirit? But what reverence and love is that, which induces you to deviate from the plan given by your great lawgiver? What sacred regards are those which lead you to set aside, or go beyond, the directions of the spirit of truth? Reverence and love may induce you to worship *Mary* and *all the saints*, as well as the *son* of *Mary*. The church of Rome hath as good a right to enjoin the worship of the former, as the church of England, or of Scotland, hath to enjoin the worship of the latter. Your obedience is as reasonable in one instance as in the other. Reflect, my friends, upon the case of the Jews. The first commandment was, "thou shalt have no other Gods but ME." But they worshipped idols. GOD, therefore, delivered them into the hands of their enemies. A great part of them were destroyed: the remainder of them were carried into captivity. But this brings me to the second consideration, which I meant to suggest to you.

SECOND CONSIDERATION. *It is our duty to beware of idolatry.* The apostle John concludes his first epistle with—"little children, keep yourselves from

from idols." But, is the worship (you will say) of the church of England idolatrous? Will the members of that church be excluded, as idolaters, from the kingdom of heaven? Far be it from me to say, concerning any article of faith, in the language of the abominable athanasian creed, "that except a man believe it he *cannot be saved*, and *without doubt shall perish everlastingly*." You believe, I trust, that all sincere and virtuous roman catholics will be saved. But do you not think that they are chargeable with idolatry? where men are idolaters through ignorance, and can preserve their minds untainted by the bad influences of the practice, we may cheerfully embrace them as fellow-heirs of a common salvation. But still let us not forget that they are idolaters, and that if *we*, who enjoy more light than they, follow their example, we shall justly become objects of the divine displeasure. If it be idolatry, to worship any besides that Being who said, "thou shalt have no other Gods but ME;" if it be idolatry to worship GOD under a *bodily form*; how can they be exculpated from the charge of idolatry, who pray not only to GOD the *Father*, but to a God the *son*, and a God the *holy ghost*, and invoke the Almighty, by his *nativity and circumcision*, his *agony and bloody sweat*, his *cross and passion*, his *death and burial*. Whether the worshipping of three different persons, as three objects of adoration, and yet constituting but one God; whether the worshipping of a divinity who is himself his own *father*.

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and his own *son*, his own *sender* and his own *messenger*; whether the worshipping of the *immutable* and *eternal* Godhead, as having *changed* the mode of his existence, and compounded himself with the frail and mortal nature of man, on purpose that he might *die*; whether this be not a species of *idolatry*, unknown in ancient times, unaccountably monstrous and irrational, and repugnant to every *natural* feeling of an unprejudiced mind, I leave to your serious and candid consideration. It matters not that the holy Jesus is an object of this idolatry. Can you imagine it will be acceptable to *him*, “who sought not his own glory,”—“who did not his own will, but the will of him who sent him.”—and who replied to the person who addressed him with the appellation of *good master*, “why callest thou *me* good? there is none good but *one*, that is *GOD*.” Would you honour the son as you honour the Father? Pay *that* kind of honour to him which he required:—not religious adoration, but that *attention to his doctrines and commands*, to which he, and every messenger from heaven, is justly entitled. All due and grateful respect be rendered to the son of *GOD*, to the captain of our salvation: but I *dare* not give that religious homage and glory to the *son*, which I verily think, and am fully persuaded, ought to be given to the *Father only*.

It may be said, that the doctrine of the trinity is an harmless speculative opinion, and that the practice
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which follows it can have no bad moral tendency. But it is hardly possible that any false notion concerning God can be perfectly innocent, and especially a notion so very false as this, viz. that divine worship should be paid to Jesus Christ, as a being, *the same in substance*, and equal in power and glory, *with the Father*. When it is apprehended, that instead of *one* there are *three* beings, to whom the perfections of deity are referred, the imaginations of men will always make a partition of divine attributes among them; and in no one of them will there be that union of venerable and amiable attributes, which we ascribe to *the one only true God*: and as the mind of man cannot contemplate more than one object at the same time; it cannot, with these notions, be possessed of that mixture of reverence and love, of which the sentiments of true devotion consist. From these principles it will follow, that while the *Father*, *son*, and *holy ghost*, are equally regarded as God, one of them will be thought to possess one set of attributes, and another a different set: one of them will be imagined to be of one disposition, and another of another; just as the heathens conceived of their several deities.

I appeal (says a great writer) to the conviction of the *athanasians* themselves, whether, in their ideas, there be not something more *stern* and *inflexible* in the character of the Father, than of the son: also, notwithstanding they ascribe divine attributes to the Fa-

ther, whether, leaving the son out of the question, something particularly amiable and engaging would not be wanting in what would remain of the divine Being ; and likewise, whether leaving out the Father and son, the *spirit* alone (according to their customary ideas of his nature and attributes, mercy and goodness) would be equal to the works of creation, providence, and redemption. If this be a just representation, there is nothing that the *athanasians* really conceive of as *one* being, to whom they ascribe all the divine perfections of justice, goodness, and mercy. The trinitarian doctrine must sometimes, therefore, be unfavourable to real goodness, by destroying the effects of those motives to virtue, which are derived from the imitation of GOD. For certainly it would not be to the advantage of any man's character to resemble GOD the *Father*, according to the ideas that some persons have of him ; ideas which they never could have entertained of him, if, by dividing the godhead, they had not divested him of some of his essential attributes.

Is it not then your duty, brethren, to abstain from a species of idolatry, which perverts your notions of the divine character, and has a natural tendency to corrupt your moral feelings ? If there be sin, if there be danger, in idolatry of any kind ; can you satisfy yourselves in a conduct, which supports idolatry ; which exposes you to the danger, and involves you in the guilt, of it ? Is this the line of conduct to be pursued

pursued by a sincere disciple of the lord Jesus? If you coolly and impartially consider the matter, you must be convinced it is not.—But let us proceed to the

THIRD CONSIDERATION. *It is not consistent with sincerity*, that an unitarian christian should take a part in any trinitarian worship. Did you certainly know that some who join in acts of public worship, believed in their heart that there is no GOD, or that he is not to be worshipped, nor will reward those who diligently seek him; would you not judge such persons as acting an inconsistent and insincere part; as contradicting their own convictions, and assuming false appearances? Could you regard them as *honest* men? Be persuaded then to reflect, how nearly your conduct resembleth theirs; if you continue to join in the worship of Beings, who, you are convinced, have no claim, on the authority of the scriptures, to such prayers and praises as are offered to them. Can you exculpate yourselves, in this case, from the charge of insincerity? Your conduct indeed is attended with circumstances which render your insincerity much more aggravated than that of the atheist. Believing in God, you must be convinced of your obligations to obedience, and cannot but know that you are forbidden to worship any but the Supreme Being.

If you be *unitarians*, do you in your *private* devotions pray to God the *son* and God the *holy ghost*?

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No?

No : you feel, that, if you did, your hearts would upbraid you with insincerity. And will you dare in *public* to trifle with the Almighty, and with your own consciences ? If *any* actions should be clear and unequivocal, *those* should be so, which have a direct concern with the God of truth. The apostle, therefore, exhorted the temporizing disciples of old, to shun the feasts in honour of idols, lest they should be supposed to entertain a veneration for the idols. The christians of the following age refused to cast incense upon the altars of the heathen gods, fearing that this action would speak a language repugnant to the sentiments of their minds. They endured every torture, and patiently submitted to a cruel death, rather than by words or deeds contradict their convictions. Their example, my brethren, is well worthy of your imitation. Indeed, unless we do follow it, we shall have no right, at the conclusion of this mortal life, to comfort ourselves with the reflection, that “ in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.” There is nothing more diametrically opposite to the character of a true christian, than the great maxim of the heathen philosophers in former times, and of unbelievers in these, viz. *to think with the wise and act with the vulgar*. The true christian is a character that is all of a piece. What he believes, he openly professes and acts upon. He is studious to avoid even the appearance of evil, and

and therefore dreads giving the least countenance to any system or mode of worship which in his own judgment he condemns. He fears God, and fears nothing else; and, *provided his own heart does not condemn him, he cares not what men may say of him, or do unto him.*

But perhaps it will be pleaded by some, that they do not repeat what they disapprove. Upon the same principle you may join in the religious services of any body of men upon earth. You may join in the worship of the church of *Rome*, in the worship of a mahometan or of a heathen assembly, and thus pass for a good *catholic* in France, a faithful *mussulman* in Turkey, and an honest *pagan* in Africa. And think one moment, whether that principle can be good, righteous, and eligible, which will admit you as well to be members of any superstitious and idolatrous church in the world, as of the church of England itself?

Suppose that a set of unenlightened heathens, zealous for the religion of their ancestors, should erect a temple in your neighbourhood, and consecrate it to the service of the gods of antiquity; should you think yourselves excusable in shunning christian assemblies, and bending your knee before the altar of Jupiter, of Venus, or of Bacchus?—Should you think it sufficient to justify your conduct, that you adopted no expression inconsistent with your real sentiments? Most certainly not. You would be shocked at the idea of such a conduct. You would think yourselves under
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an indispensable obligation to confine yourselves to *that* worship which is more agreeable to your christian principles, to that temple in which your feelings would not be wounded, nor your devotions disturbed, by the addresses of your fellow-worshippers to the deities of their imaginations. But, for the very same reason, it behoves you to forsake the communion of the church of England, and join in the religious services of a society whose principles are more agreeable to your own: unless you think that the circumstance of its being established by the *civil magistrate*, creates a distinction, unless you think that the civil magistrate can change the very nature of right and wrong, and make that consistent with integrity, which would otherwise be insincere and hypocritical.

Your attendance at the trinitarian place of worship, will lead others to imagine that you are trinitarians. Let me put a parallel case. Suppose there are two music-meetings in the town where you live, in one of which there is never any song allowed, but what you are convinced is perfectly consistent with religion and virtue; while in the other there are some profane and indecent songs mingled with the good? Suppose your son voluntarily chose to attend the latter, and there shewed no dislike to the profaneness and immodesty of the songs, but seemed as much to join with these as with such as were innocent; would you not severely reprove and condemn him, and imagine that he had too much love

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for obscenity and impiety? And suppose he should tell you at home, that when he was at the music-meeting, and bore a part in the tunes, he either stopped when the indecent passages occurred, or else sung some other words; would you admit this as a sufficient excuse? Would you not insist upon it, that it was his duty, there, upon the spot, to publish his dislike, or rather to resolve to go thither no more? And would you not think that his *choosing* to avoid the innocent concert, and to frequent the vicious one, was a sign he was grown in love with profaneness and immorality? And would you not urge that his protesting against fact would not serve his turn? No more will *your* protesting against fact serve yours. Is there not all the *same* reason to condemn your practice, which is exactly like it? By taking a part in trinitarian worship, you virtually profess, in the face of all who see you do so, that you are trinitarians.—Unless your contradiction of this profession be as public as the action itself, you must, with regard to many, be acting the hypocrite. And, indeed, if it were possible, for you to caution all who witness your devotions, from considering you as trinitarians, there would be so glaring an inconsistency in your conduct, that you must expect the censure, if not contempt of the honest.

If you really look upon several passages in the liturgy to be contrary to truth, and to the holy scripture, and to contain in them contradictions and idolatry;

idolatry; is there not as much reason, that you should leave the communion of the church, as that your son should avoid profane music-meetings? Act a consistent part. Leave your hypocrisy. Dare not any longer to trifle with men and with a heart-searching God. Be not ashamed of the truth in an unbelieving and scoffing age. "Be faithful to death, and you shall inherit the crown of life*."—But consider, farther,

FOURTHLY. *Your obligations to the cause of truth and christianity.* Do you not look upon it as desirable, my unitarian friends, that the truth should be generally known and received? But how is it possible that this should ever be the case, if it be never *professed*? Do you think there would have been at this day any christians in the world, if all the disciples of Jesus, in the earlier ages, had contented themselves with a silent acquiescence in the truth of the gospel, whilst they regularly frequented the temples of idol gods? Do you imagine that there would have been any reformation two hundred years ago, had the first protestants never thought of withdrawing themselves from the communion of the church of Rome, nor of forming societies, whose religious services should be conducted more agreeably to the scripture plan? Can it be expected, then, that the doctrine of the *divine unity* should gain ground, whilst unitarians remain quietly

* See an Address to conforming arians, printed in 1735; reprinted, at Cambridge, in 1788.

quietly in a trinitarian church ? The experiment, however, has been tried. About an hundred years since, there was in England a body of very respectable unitarians. They were men of the best characters ; they were zealous for the truth ; but they did not see that duty called upon them to absent themselves from the established places of worship. The consequence was, that, upon their deaths, the doctrine of the unity of God was nearly lost in this country. Mr. Firmin, a most excellent unitarian christian of that period, became sensible towards the end of his life that they had acted upon mistaken and pernicious principles. He began to fear that the true idea of God would be lost among christians. He was painfully apprehensive, that unless unitarians formed themselves into distinct religious societies, the continual use of terms which, in their ordinary signification, are confessed by all to imply three Gods, would *paganize*, at some time, the whole christian church. The present flourishing state of the unitarian cause, is principally to be ascribed to the decisive and noble conduct of those honest men, who have withdrawn themselves from the established church, and sacrificed to truth and conscience every prospect of interest and emolument. Were all of you, my brethren, to imitate their example, it would be an effectual means of serving the cause of truth. But nothing short of your separation from every trinitarian society of christians, will be of any lasting avail.

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There cannot be a plainer rule of life than this, that every man should do what he would wish others to do, and what he is convinced would be best, if all others would do. No man can tell what influence his own example may have to produce a good effect. Whatever comes of it, he by these means discharges his conscience, and (as far as following his duty in this instance can do it) *saves his own soul* *. Perhaps it would be the means of relieving from a heavy burden the mind of many a minister of the lord Jesus, who is convinced that the offices of the church are very distant from the principles of the gospel, but whose apprehensions of the distresses of poverty are a bar to his following the dictates of truth and conscience. Such would find congregations ready to receive them as their pastors. You would become their friends and patrons. What satisfaction would it yield you ; and how would you rejoice in the hope of sharing the rewards, as you had eased the trials of those righteous men, who nobly sacrificing every prospect of future advancement, and dignity, would readily put up with a scanty subsistence, rather than disobey the dictates of their consciences ! Would it not afford much greater satisfaction to your minds, than can ever result from your present course of conduct, which encourages in their hypocrisy those clergymen, who not only subscribe what they do not believe,

* See a Letter to a layman on the subject of Mr. Lindsey's proposal for a reformed church, p. 18.

believe, but utter every day what they must consider as impious falsehoods, in the form of a solemn address to almighty God. And can it be easy to you to be accessory to other men's sins; and, thus, to be, in some measure, the cause why *some perish, for whom Christ died!*

By continuing in communion with a trinitarian church, you not only do your part to prevent a reformation, but you essentially injure the cause of Christ, and take the most effectual step in your power to confirm and perpetuate the prejudices of unbelievers against the religion of Jesus. A clergyman (who had been a chaplain aboard a ship) writing to Mr. Whiston, says, "I was sorry that the turks, jews, &c. were so very much offended with the christian religion, upon these two accounts, viz. the one the worshipping of images, the other the belief and worship of the trinity, *which seemed to them to be the belief of three Gods.*" La Compte's history of China speaks of the heathens, as deriding the christian doctrine of a mortal God, and upon that account considering christianity as *fabulous*. Dr. Caufabon says, that *this doctrine has kept more people from embracing the christian faith than any thing he knows of*. Mahomet, in his Koran, says, "It is long since the infideis (meaning the christians) have said that there are three Gods; certainly there is but one." Thus does the doctrine of the trinity prove a stumbling-block in the way of jews, mahometans, and heathens.

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Nor is it to be wondered at, that some, even in this country, offended with the harsh sounds and irreconcilable principles of the established liturgy, forsake the assemblies of public worship, whilst others are prejudiced against christianity, and driven into infidelity. Will it not be a service to such, to set them an example of distinguishing between the gospel and the corruptions of it? Will it not afford them a fair opportunity to judge of its truth, if you exhibit it in its plain and native dress? Let them see what christianity is in *itself*. Your continued conformity misleads them, and contributes to keep out of sight the real and genuine gospel. Every error retained, obscures the light and glory of the gospel. Peculiarly pernicious, then, must be the influence of an error which beclouds the fundamental doctrine of revelation—the *unity* of GOD, and multiplies the objects of religious adoration.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

THOUGH the justness of this representation be acknowledged; it may be objected, perhaps, by some,

(FIRST OBJECTION.) *That it does not become common lay christians to busy themselves about a reformation, and that this matter ought to be left to the bishops and the rest of the clergy.*

But let me request such persons to remember, that the arguments and reasonings which have been
adopted

adopted in this address, apply to all orders of christians. Is not religion the concern of *every* man? Is it not the duty of *every* man to obey God? Does not *every* man worship God for himself? Is not integrity and sincerity required in *every* man? Is not the truth of the same importance to *every* man? Is not *every* man under an obligation to lay no stumbling-block in the way of the conversion and salvation of unbelievers? You may as well say, my friends, that the bishops and clergy are to be just, and charitable, and temperate, and pious, for you; and that it is no concern of yours to cultivate these virtues. But pray consider, that if you be not *good christians yourselves*, you cannot expect to be *saved* yourselves.

Besides, you have no reason to suppose that the bishops and clergy in general will ever promote a reformation. The reformation from popery in the sixteenth century, was brought about in opposition to most of the bishops and clergy. The church of England was placed upon its present footing in opposition to them. The bishops have always opposed any farther reformation to the utmost of their influence. Many unsuccessful attempts have been made to obtain their concurrence in advancing that and similar objects. It cannot be reasonably looked for in men whose rank, and wealth, and power, depend (or are supposed to depend) upon things continuing in their present state. It cannot be expected that

those clergymen who have conscientiously subscribed the articles, and approve the services of the church, should be friends to any material alteration. Even some who cannot but *wish* the reformation of many things, in so old and complex a system as that of the church, have discernment enough to foresee, that if a reformation should once begin, it will not stop where they would choose to have it; and it is but too plain, that they are absolutely bent upon retaining, at the hazard of perpetuating whatever themselves think wrong, many things which they are sensible cannot escape an inquiry, if an inquiry be encouraged. Like spiders in the center of an immense web, they feel at every extremity of it; fearing that if what seem to be only the *outworks* be demolished, the whole fabric will come to the ground*.

With *you*, therefore, my brethren, it lies to *begin* a reformation. You may not live to see the *completion* of it: but it will undoubtedly go on and be gaining ground every day. The heads of the church and state *must follow*, though they will not *lead*.

But to the conduct which has been pointed out, you may, perhaps, make a

SECOND OBJECTION, viz. *That there are many good things in the church services, and that you show your candour and charity in putting up with what you think amiss.*

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* Letter to a layman, p. 20.

Such a plea would equally excuse a concurrence in the worship of the church of Rome, from the liturgies* of which, these excellent things are borrowed. Besides, no mixture of truth can alter the nature of the errors blended with it; nor any ardour and elevation of spirit in some parts preserve us innocent in the use of those services, the leading sentiments of which are *sinful*. As to the *candour* and *charity* you wish to show, permit me to observe, that we ought to be greatly upon our guard, that we do not *impose* upon ourselves, by imagining that we possess and exercise a virtue, of which we have only the *appearance*. There is scarcely any thing more injurious to our religious character and conduct, than this *self-deception*. I fear it is too often the case, that those who persuade themselves that they are actuated by *candour* in attending statedly, or occasionally,

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* Even in the darkest times of popery, there was a variety of forms in different sees. That uniformity was not then known, which is now so rigidly insisted upon. The *act of uniformity of service*, which passed in the reign of Edward VI. in the year 1549, begins thus: "Whereas of long time there hath been had, in this realm of England, and in Wales, diverse forms of common prayer, commonly called the service of the church, that is to say, the use of Sarum, of York, of Bangor, and of Lincoln: and besides the same, now of late, much more diverse and fundry forms and fashions have been used in the cathedral and parish churches of England and Wales," &c.

upon the worship of the *established* church, never think of shewing their candour by joining in the religious services of some *little, mean, and despised sect*, and would really be *ashamed* to be seen in their poor and obscure conventicles. But, in truth, such persons totally mistake the nature and proper exercise of candour. Candour does not consist in the *sacrifice of principle*, in the *countenancing and supporting of error*, but in *meekly bearing* with the sentiments of other people, in *loving the men*, though we *reject* their *opinions*, and in entertaining just views of their character and future condition. You show no true candour and charity, then, in adopting the idolatrous worship of the church of England, or of any other church. When you publicly and uniformly show your detestation of that worship, you will afford yourselves an opportunity of testifying your charity towards those who conscientiously perform it. But you will, perhaps, state, as a

THIRD OBJECTION, *That you have some office, or employment, in the church, in the discharge of which you benefit the community.*

But do you really think that the service, which you render to your neighbourhood, is by any means equivalent to the injury you do to your own mind and to the cause of pure christianity? Will it by any means make up for your countenancing falsehood and idolatry, for your upholding the most glaring corruptions of the gospel, and bringing a discredit upon the

the christian religion? Do you really imagine that God stands in any need of your insincerity, wickedness and ruin, in order to accomplish his designs? *To do evil that good may come*, is an evil which Paul disclaims with abhorrence; and James says, that *if a man offend*, that is knowingly, wilfully and habitually offend, *in one point, he is guilty of all*.

No longer, then, support the grossest corruptions of christianity, no longer disguise the character and perfections of the almighty, no longer afford an occasion for the unbelief of the jew, or for the ridicule of the gentile. Profess the genuine gospel of Jesus; separate yourselves from an idolatrous church; protest against her errors; awaken the attention of men; excite them to inquiry; teach them to shake off that slavish reverence for public forms, and an established religion, which screens jargon, absurdity, and mysticism from a free examination. I address you as christians: I address you as persons who have learned to look not entirely at the things which *are seen and temporal*, but at things which are *unseen and eternal*; as persons who think it their duty to give some attention to the concerns of religion, as well as to the concerns of business. If you be disposed to obey God rather than *men*; if you have that holy dread of *idolatry*, which animated the primitive believers; if you be friends to that *simplicity* and *godly sincerity*, in which the apostle gloried; if you have any *love for the truth*; any *reverence for the gospel*, any regard

regard to the *salvation of mankind*; I am persuaded you will feel yourselves disposed to pay some attention to the thoughts which have now been submitted to your consideration. But there are always difficulties to be encountered in treading the path of duty, and especially *that* part of it, to which we have hitherto been strangers. Happy the man who is not discouraged by them from proceeding! Happy the man who has resolution and steadiness enough to encounter all, and to “press forward to the mark of “the prize of his high calling of GOD in Christ “Jesus!” Some discouraging thoughts are now, perhaps, presenting themselves to your minds, my friends. Be upon your guard, I pray you, that they have not more influence upon you than they deserve. Consider that if you be unitarians in principle, every suggestion which pleads in favour of your conformity to trinitarian worship, pleads in *opposition to your duty and your eternal interest*. One difficulty, and which, indeed, may be considered as an unanswerable objection to the conduct here recommended, is that

(FOURTH OBJECTION.) *There is no place of worship near you, in which GOD the Father only is worshipped.*

It is a most melancholy thought that this should be the case with any of you. But, alas! it must be acknowledged, that where there are even *dissenting* societies, there are frequently no *unitarian* ones, many dissenters being as firm trinitarians as any church-of-
England

England man, and conducting their religious services in a manner equally repugnant to the feelings and principles of a conscientious worshipper of the *one, only living, and true* GOD. But when there is a dissenting society of unitarians, you ought, undoubtedly, to join them in preference to the church of England: for though you like a *liturgy* better than an *extempore prayer*; yet a matter of this kind ought never to be considered of so much importance as to make you sacrifice sincerity, truth, and the gospel cause. But if there be in your neighbourhood *no* unitarian place of worship of *any* kind, there is so much the greater call for your exertions. A clear, explicit, open, and decisive conduct is absolutely necessary, if you would serve the cause of GOD and of truth. If you would be the *only man* in your neighbourhood whose eyes almighty GOD has opened to the truth; still be persuaded to "flee from idolatry." If you make a point of conscience to devote the Sunday, or any other part of the week, to religious purposes, your conduct will soon be noticed, some persons will be led to inquire, and it *cannot* be long before you will meet with some, ready to join you in social worship upon a scriptural plan. A cause so good, *must* gain advocates, when it is properly understood. Nothing is wanting but *attention and inquiry*, and the truth will flourish. Let the steadiness of your conduct, added to the perfection of your character, excite that attention. As soon as you meet with any ready to join
you

you in adoring the ONE GOD, you may enjoy all the comforts and advantages of social worship. You cannot imagine that it is *essential* to the utility and acceptibleness of social worship, that *numbers* should be assembled together in a house devoted to the purpose, and with all the attendants of a minister regularly educated, and other officers.

In the first ages of christianity we read of *churches* that did not extend beyond the circle of a family, as the church in Nympha's house*, and that in the house of Philemon, &c. It cannot admit of a doubt whether it be not preferable to worship the only true GOD with one's *family only*, agreeably to the scriptures, and in the language of sincerity and truth, than to join the largest society with every circumstance of state, convenience and splendor, in a worship which the scriptures forbid, and our hearts disapprove. You will find it more easy to put such a plan into execution than you might at first imagine. Of useful sermons there is a great variety, such as Tillotson's, Secker's, Balguy's, Jortin's, Lardner's, Bourne's, Holland's, and Priestley's.—You will be well able to conduct the devotional services, with the assistance of Mr. Lindsey's reformed liturgy, of that used at Salisbury†, or of Dr. Priestley's forms of prayers, and

* Col. iv. 15.

† There is also a valuable one lately published, at the new unitarian chapel in Manchester, as well as a copious collection of psalms and hymns printed at Birmingham.

and other offices, for the use of unitarian societies. In these publications you will find services for the lord's supper and for baptism, which it is unreasonable to suppose can be conducted properly by none, but a regular ordained minister, for nothing of this kind is intimated in the new Testament.*

By thus maintaining a noble independence and consistency of conduct in all your religious concerns, you will improve and confirm your own character; you will be an honour to the cause you espouse; you will render essential service to mankind, and be enabled to look forward with pleasure to the great day of retribution. You and your fellow labourers in the cause of GOD, will be like a *city set upon a hill*: you will be the means of disseminating, far and wide, the principles of true christian worship, and of diffusing a spirit of serious and rational zeal.

But, perhaps, you will start another difficulty, viz. that

(FIFTH OBJECTION.) *You have reason to expect a violent opposition to your separating from the church, on the part of your nearest friends and connections.*

Your case is undoubtedly to be pitied. But possibly your fears lead you to imagine that they will carry their resentment much farther, than there is any just ground for fearing they will. When they see that you act upon *principle*, that the favour and approbation of GOD is the grand motive of your conduct, and that you are *steady* in what you esteem to be the path of duty; their resentment will probably

bably be softened, and their confidence and affection towards you, will gradually revive. Indeed, the mere circumstance of your dissent being an *old* thing, (as it must in time become) will naturally wear off that *dread* towards it, which was felt at first: and they will at length perceive and acknowledge, that it has not made you such a *strange being* as they imagined it would. At any rate the line of duty is clear. Your hardships will be no greater than those which our lord laid it down as absolutely necessary that his first followers should endure, than those which were often experienced by the reformers of the sixteenth century, or than those which every faithful disciple of Jesus will be ready to undergo, when called to them in the course of duty. “ He that loveth father or
 “ mother more than me (saith our lord) is not worthy of me. He that loveth son or daughter more
 “ than me, is not worthy of me. Whosoever he be
 “ of you that forsaketh not all which he hath, his
 “ father and mother, and wife and children, and
 “ brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he
 “ cannot be my disciple.” May God give you grace to act up to your christian profession!

But some perhaps will say,

(SIXTH OBJECTION.) *I cannot bear to be so singular, as to leave the church in which I have been educated, especially if it be necessary to make my house a place of social worship.*

But let such persons consider, that the greater the *effort*, the greater will be the *merit*, and that where
 duty

duty is concerned, all other considerations, be their weight greater or less, ought to be postponed to it. We christians ought to be thankful that we have nothing more difficult to encounter. What should we have done in the day of adversity, if we cannot bear prosperity? And it ought not to be forgotten, that none will be distinguished by our great master as his worthy disciples and followers, but those who shall be ready to risk and even to abandon every thing in the world, and even to *take up their cross* for the sake of his gospel. Every situation and circumstance of things, has its peculiar difficulties, which wise and conscientious men will lay their account with meeting, and be prepared to bear. This, in fact, must be done by every person who does not adopt the principle of *universal conformity to the world*, and who will not make his religion subservient to it. But what will such religion do for a man, when the world and all the follies and vanities of it, shall be no more*?

It is *your* professed faith as christians, that assuredly as the great author of our religion, the ambassador of truth and grace, has already appeared in the world, he will be revealed from heaven, to raise his sincere disciples to glory and immortality. How will all the great and splendid things of life disappear before the brightness of his coming! Is there need of more than one moment's calm reflection to convince you, that then the only thing of consequence will be the appro-
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* Preface to Forms of prayer, &c.

bation of his Father and our Father, of his God and our God? And can we really entertain the serious and rational hope of it, merely because we have professed his religion, whilst we have joined with the *many* to countenance, and with the *great* to support the corruptions of it? Will it be then a valid plea, that *fashion* and *interest* suffered us to depart from his laws, to act inconsistently with our own convictions, and obey *men* rather than GOD? Conceive how your minds would be affected, were the awful appearance of the judge, an event which you had grounds to look for, within a few days; were the heavens to open, and you to see him coming in the clouds, in whom you believe as the guide to eternal life—him who declared that the “true worshippers will worship” “the FATHER in spirit and in truth”—him who was himself “the faithful and true witness,” and died “leaving us an example to follow his steps”—him who hath warned us, that “whosoever loveth father or mother more than him, is not worthy of him”—him who hath laid it down as a certain principle, that his true disciples are not of the world! It is left to your own minds to imagine, how a conduct formed from a deference to the example and authority of *worldly men*, or from the views of profit and greatness, will appear to such a judge, and to *your own hearts*, when summoned to his tribunal, and to receive according to your works.

You believe the christian religion to be true. Believing it to be true, can you doubt the propriety of
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my laying these considerations before you, or resist the force of them? You cannot but believe that the great founder of your faith will verify all his declarations: and then what will be the state of those who have regarded the *world* and what it can offer, more than *his word* and promises? Can you look forward to their situation without fear, without solicitude to escape the shame and disgrace of it? These expectations are sufficient to expose the weakness and folly of being captivated by the pomps and emoluments, enslaved by the authority, or ensnared by the fashion, of any religious establishment whatsoever. These are things which will all vanish away as airy phantoms. But truth, fidelity to God, and integrity of character, are things of lasting excellence and worth, of essential importance on that day which will try all things: everlasting honours await them; they will draw after them, in the final issue, stability, glory, and life for evermore.

It is but a short time before we shall find the truth of these things: they should therefore affect our minds, and influence our conduct, as if they were to be immediately revealed. "It is but a short time that we have, any of us, to abide here; and therefore we should lose no opportunity of bearing our testimony to the truth of God."

Whatever be your circumstances, dread joining, with your enlightened and informed minds, in *unscriptural*, *insincere*, and *idolatrous* worship, remembering

the words of the lord Jesus, that the FATHER seeketh such to worship him, as “ worship him in *spirit* “ *and in truth* :” and “ thou shalt love the LORD “ THY GOD, and him ONLY shalt thou serve.”

Dread also that awful voice from heaven, respecting all antichristian corruptions of the gospel in figurative Babylon : “ Come out of her, my people, that “ ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not “ of her plagues.”

That you may be daily growing in grace ; that you may act with the firmness of men, with the seriousness and consistency of christians, is the sincere prayer of

Your affectionate friend,

and brother in the lord Jesus.

Dec. 12, 1789.

TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED.

It is the opinion of many learned men, that in the following passages, among others, the translators of our present English bible have made considerable mistakes.

Isaiah ix. 6. is rendered by ancient and many modern interpreters, "His name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the strong, the mighty, the father of the age." An examination of Mr. Robinson's plea, p. 39. See also Mr. Coulthurst's blunders exposed, by W. Friend, M.A. No. 1.

Acts vii. 59. The word *God* is not in the original.

Acts xx. 28. In the best and most ancient manuscript copies of the new Testament, it is "feed the church of the lord, which he hath purchased with his blood," not *God*. See Friend, No. 5.

Rom. ix. 5. might be translated "whose (i. e. the Israelites) are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came: God who is over all be blessed for ever, Amen." See Friend, No. 2, or Clarke's Scripture doctrine.

1 Cor. i. 2. should be translated (say some learned critics) "with all that, in every place, are called by the name of Jesus Christ our lord." Two dissertations, by T. Lindley, M.A. p. 95, &c.

Phil.

Phil. ii. 6. would have been more justly translated, "who, being in the form of God, thought not the being like to God a thing to be greedily seized by him; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself," &c.—Examination of Robertson, p. 76. See Le Clerc's Supplement to Hammond.

Heb. i. 8. should rather be rendered, "but concerning the son, he saith, God is thy throne for ever and ever," that is, God is the support of thy throne, &c. See Pierce on the Hebrews.

1 Tim. iii. 16. It is doubtful whether we should read "*God* was manifest," or, "*which* was manifest." In our first English version, it is thus rendered, and openly it is a greet sacrament of pitee, that thing that was, schewide in fleische, it is justified in spirit, it apperide to aungels, it is prechide to hethene men, it is beleevd in the world, it is taken up in glorie." Frend, No. 5.

1 John iii. 16. Most copies, omitting the word *God*, read this verse thus, "Herein perceive we love, in that he laid down his life for us." Christie's Discourses, p. 253. and Benson on the place.

1 John v. 7, 8. should read thus, "For there are three that bear record, the spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one." The words [*in heaven, the Father, the word, and the holy ghost, and these three are one, and there are three that bear*
witness

witness in earth] have never been proved to be in ANY greek manuscript, before the invention of printing; nor were ever cited by any of the numerous writers in the whole arian controversy, concerning the trinity, in the fourth century. In the English bibles in the reign of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. they were printed in a *different character*, to signify their being wanting in the original. See Emlyn's Inquiry into the authority of 1 John v. 7. Remarks on Mr. Travis, in Commentaries and essays, vol. i. and Mr. Capel Lofft's Answer to Dr. Knowles.

Rev. i. 11. The words [*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*] were probably not written by the author of the book, as they are said to be wanting in all the best manuscript copies. Examination of Robinson, p. 27.

Those who wish to see what is said in vindication of these deviations from our common English translation of the scriptures, may consult the books above referred to. They will find more upon the same subject in the "Catechist; or an inquiry into the doctrine of the scriptures concerning the one true God;" price 2s. or in the "Sequel to an apology on resigning the vicarage of Catterick:" both by the Rev. Mr. Lindsey. Many valuable criticisms will likewise be found in "A defence of the unity of God," by Mr. Clarke, an attorney at Uxbridge.—The unitarian doctrine is supported in a masterly manner, in "Discourses on the divine unity," by W. Christie,
jun.

jun. merchant, of Montrose, a gentleman who has pursued the course of conduct recommended in the above address, conducting the religious services of a newly raised society, whose professed object is to worship the only one true God.

Should it be said, that as it is impossible for unlearned christians to judge of the authenticity of a passage, or of the proper translation of it, they ought to trust to our English bible; I would ask why they must trust to our common version rather than to any other? Were the authors of it any thing more than fallible men? Did they excel all other learned persons in knowledge; or were they more free from prejudice? If not; why may they not confide in other men of learning and integrity as well as in them? That the common translation is very imperfect, and that a more correct one is highly desirable, has been repeatedly acknowledged by the most competent judges both in and out of the church.

But though it is out of the power of unlearned christians to decide concerning the propriety of any translation of a text, from an acquaintance with the original languages; yet as they are able to perceive what the *general strain* of scripture is upon any particular point, they must conclude that the probability is that those translators are right, who make the scripture consistent with itself. If an unlearned person find, for instance, that the scripture uniformly teach us, that there is but one God—that they never cau-
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tion us against so understanding this, as to exclude a trinity of persons—that Jesus is usually spoken of, as the son of man—that he uniformly prayed to the Father, as the Being upon whom he entirely depended—is it not natural and reasonable for them to adopt those translations of doubtful texts which do not make such texts contradict a variety of plain and unequivocal passages? If they admit that the scriptures are consistent with themselves, they must either do this, or else interpret those few texts which seem to be repugnant to the general tenor of scripture in a different sense from what the words seem at first sight to convey. And indeed this is sometimes necessary when no disputed doctrine is concerned.

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